

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks. Prior to entry of this response, Claims 1-21 were pending in the application, of which Claims 1, 13, and 17 are independent. In the Office Action dated June 16, 2010, Claim 9 was objected to, Claims 13-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101, Claims 1-8, 12-14, and 17-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), and Claims 9-11, 15-16, and 21 were objected to, but were deemed allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Following this response, Claims 1, 3-8, 10-14, and 16-19 remain in this application with Claims 2, 9, 15, and 20-21 being canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicants hereby address the Examiner's rejections in turn.

I. Objection to the Claims

In the Office Action dated June 16, 2010, the Examiner objected to Claim 9 as containing an informality. Claim 9 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer rendering this objection moot.

II. Rejection of the Claims Under 35 U.S.C. § 101

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 13-16 under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as being directed to non-statutory subject matter. Claim 15 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 13-14 and 16 have been amended and Applicants respectfully submit that the amendments overcome this rejection and add no new matter.

III. Rejection of the Claims Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 1-8, 12-14, and 17-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Claims 1, 13, and 17 have been amended to include subject matter deemed allowable by the Examiner. Applicants respectfully submit that the amendments overcome this rejection and add no new matter. Accordingly, independent Claims 1, 13, and 17 each patentably distinguish the present invention over the cited reference, and Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection of Claims 1, 13, and 17.

Dependent Claims 3-8, 10-12, 14, 16, and 18-19 are also allowable at least for the reasons described above regarding independent Claims 1, 13, and 17, and by virtue of their respective dependencies upon independent Claims 1, 13, and 17. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection of dependent Claims 3-8, 10-12, 14, 16, and 18-19.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims, as amended, are patentable over the cited references. The preceding arguments are based only on the arguments in the Official Action, and therefore do not address patentable aspects of the invention that were not addressed by the Examiner in the Official Action. The claims may include other elements that are not shown, taught, or suggested by the cited art. Accordingly, the preceding argument in favor of patentability is advanced without prejudice to other bases of patentability. Furthermore, the Office

Action contains a number of statements reflecting characterizations of the related art and the claims. Regardless of whether any such statement is identified herein, Applicants decline to automatically subscribe to any statement or characterization in the Office Action.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 13-2725.

Respectfully submitted,
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